

Message Text

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ACTION OFA-01

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 ISO-00 L-03 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 H-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 SCS-03 EB-07 SCA-01

DLOS-04 CG-00 DOTE-00 SS-15 TRSE-00 /058 W

----- 104680

R 280600Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 714

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT MORESBY 0722

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PBOR, PP

SUBJ: STARKIST-KAIGAI FISHING INCIDENT

1. PNG MINISTER NATIONAL RESOURCES JEPHCOTT WHILE OBTAINING VISA TO U.S. ON JULY 24 STATED HE PLANNED VISIT STARKIST MANAGEMENT IN U.S. AND KAIGAI CO. IN JAPAN ON "UNOFFICIAL" BASIS CONCERNING RECENT DISPUTE IN PNG WATERS BETWEEN FISHERMEN OF THE TWO COMPANIES. HE REFUSED DETAILS OF DISPUTE STATING HE DESIRED KEEP MATTER IN UNOFFICIAL CHANNEL.

2. POLOFF CONTACTED PNG DEPT FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE RABAU TO OBTAIN DETAILS. MATTER INITIALLY UNKNOWN FOREIGN MINISTRY BUT DEPUTY DISTRICT COMMISSIONER RABAU LATER PROVIDED OUTLINE OF EVENTS AS FOLLOWS.

3. ON JULY 17 APPROXIMATELY 7:30 PM ABOUT 2 MILES OFF CAPE LAMBERT (EAST NEW BRITAIN DISTRICT) TWO STARKIST TENDER BOATS WERE SIGHTED BY JAPANESE VESSEL KAISEI MARU NO. 1 BELONGING TO CARPENTER'S KAIGAI, A JOINT PNG-JAPANESE FISHING VENTURE. STARKIST BOATS WERE ALLEGEDLY BAIT FISHING IN AREA RESERVED FOR CARPENTER-KAIGAI BOATS

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(TECHNICALLY A CIVIL OFFENSE). STARKIST BOAT MANNED

ENTIRELY BY KOREANS AND PNG-JAPAN SHIP BY JAPANESE. JAPANESE KAISEI MARU NO. 1 CREW APPREHENDED ONE STARKIST TENDER, HELD STARKIST KOREAN CREW ON BOARD, AND THREATENED TO BLOW UP ANY OTHER STARKIST BOATS APPREHENDED IN FUTURE IN CARPENTEL-KAIGAI FISHING WATERS. RABAU CUSTOMS AND POLICE OFFICERS INTERVENED, RELEASED STARKIST TENDER AND CREW, AND SEARCHED CARPENTER-KAIGAI VESSEL FOR EXPLOSIVES. JAPANESE CAPTAIN WAS GIVEN VERBAL REPRIMAND FOR THREATENING STARKIST VESSEL, AND FOR DETAINING ITS CREW.

4. AMCIT HENRY MORGAN, STARKIST REP AT RABAU, WAS ABOARD REEFER-STAR IN VICINITY OF TENDERS DIRECTING FISHING OPERATIONS. HE IS ONLY KNOWN AMCIT INVOLVED.

5. NEIGHER MORGAN NOR ANY OTHER PARTY OR AUTHORITY HAS PREFERRED CHARGES OR IS LIKELY TO DO SO ACCORDING TO BOTH DFRT AND THE RABAU DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE.

COMMENT: IN MID-MAY STARKIST REP MORGAN INFORMED ECONOFF THAT HE WAS FACED WITH CONTINUING DELAY IN PART GPNG IN PROVIDING NECESSARY ADDITIONAL BAIT FISHING GROUNDS. HE ADDED THAT IF STARKIST DID NOT RAISE PRESENT 6,500 TON CATCH TO 10,000 TONS, STARKIST WOULD BE FORCED TO PULL OUT OF PNG SINCE FIRM ALLEGEDLY OPERATING AT LOSS.

6. BAIT FISHING GROUNDS ISSUE NOW MOVING TOWARD RESOLUTION THANKS TO RECENT GPNG INITIATIVES.

7. SUSPECT JEPHCOTT MISSION IS TO REASSURE STARKIST THAT GPNG GENUINELY DESIRES STARKIST'S CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT HERE IN TUNA INDUSTRY, AND TO ATTEMPT DOWNPLAY RECENT BAIT GROUNDS INCIDENT.
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Margaret P. Grafeld
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